

SPECIAL ISSUE! SEVEN CHRISTMAS CHILLERS! WITH COLOR!

CREEPY

NOV-8
PDC
\$1.25

TWAS THE
NIGHT BEFORE
CHRISTMAS

...AND ALL THROUGH THE HOUSE
LITTLE CREATURES WERE STIRRING...
...STREWING BODIES ABOUT!





HO! HO! HO!
CHRISTMAS... HUMBUS!
ONLY DIFFERENCE
BETWEEN OLD MAN
SCROOGE AND YOUR
UNCLE CREEPY IS I
REVEL IN GIVING
PRESENTS TO MY
DEAR FRIENDS!

YOU MIGHT
EVEN SAY I
AM **GENEROUS!**
I HAVE **SEVEN**
DELICIOUS GIFTS
FOR ALL OF YOU,
COMPLETE WITH
SPECTRAL WRAPPINGS
AND SPOOKY
RIBBONS!

IF YOU LOOK
UNDER YOUR TREE
AND IN YOUR MANDING
BOOKS, YOU'LL BARELY
DETECT MY GIFTS...
THE WRAPPINGS ARE A
LITTLE BLOODY!

I'M SURE YOU'LL
FIND **GHASTLY**
DELIGHT IN MY
CHRISTMAS STORIES!
BAH! HUMBUS!
NO NEED TO THANK
ME... JUST HAVE A
CREEPY
CHRISTMAS!



OUR COVER
A very special holiday gift is left by "The Christmas Bunnies of Twisted Bay"!! A monster classic for Sade! Levels: A shock coming to the baby!

**Editor-In-Chief
& Publisher**
JAMES WARREN

Editor
W.R. DUBAY

Production Manager
W.R. McHALLLEY

Circulation Director
AR SIDEMAN

Interior Color
RICH COUBEN

Cover
KEN KELLY

Book Cover
SANJULIAN

Artists This Issue
ADOLFO ABELLAN
VICENTE ALCAZAR
RICH COUBEN
BRENDON MONKES
MARTIN SALVADOR
LEOPOLD SANCHEZ
JOHN SEVERIN
BERNI WRIGHTSON

Writers This Issue
GERRY SOUDREAU
BUD LEWIS
DOUG MOENCH

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CREEPLY

CONTENTS ISSUE NO. 68 JANUARY 1975

4 DEAR UNCLE CREEPY "What's the matter with you guys? Competition is keen. And Warren is standing still," notes Daley of Chicago. "How about that science fiction mag? Or adventure, war, westerns!"

6 CREEPY'S CATACOMBS Is it true what they're saying... whispering? Is Berni Wrightson really a patchwork monster sewn together from parts of Will Eisner's, Graham Ingels' and Neal Adams' bodies?

19 CHRISTMAS EVE CAN KILL To Christopher Matheson, N.Y. cop, theft, suicide and murder are nightly occurrences. There's never a happy ending... except for sometimes, on an occasional Christmas eve!

27 REFLECTIONS IN A SPIKE An old man. A boy. Strangers thrown together, battling poverty, hunger, and a miserable Chicago winter. They had no one. Nothing. But they were willing to kill for each other!

35 ANTI-CHRISTMAS Billie Jo's baby had to die. All the babies born on Christmas in Nazareth, Indiana, had to be slaughtered. If not, the evil one... the one known as the Anti-Christ, would begin his reign of terror!

43 A GENTLE TAKEOVER It was December 24th, 1999. And Oliver Chubbins was mad! Tomorrow would not be Xmas. Xmas was outlawed years ago. And for that, Oliver thought, lawmakers would be punished!

51 THE CHRISTMAS VISIT The guy was weird. First, he cures a crippled newsboy. Then he prevents a suicide. Finally, he saves the life of a sidewalk Santa. It was almost like he was giving miracles for Xmas!

59 THE CHRISTMAS GNOME It was an old tradition... leaving milk out for the Xmas gnome. But Timothy knew gnomes didn't like milk. Their favorite drink was brandy, with a side order of pickled eggs!

**CREEPY'S
CATACOMBS**

BERNI WRIGHTSON



and immediately found work at National Com-

Several years later, Bernal and Vaughn Bode collaborated on the color comic strip "Purple Photography" for *Swank Magazine*.

While working on the first issues of *Swamp Thing* for DC color comics, Berni moved to update New York.

Swamp Thing was an immediate success Berniweya, because he has an affinity for "dead things."

Soon after his move, Berel produced some surprisingly professional paintings for several paperback book companies though he had never painted before that time. Again the work of his friends?

In early 1974, Berris moved again—this time to Warren Publishing. Since then he has given us many fine stories about monsters, the living dead, and other macabre creatures. Among them is the terrifying classic "Jennifer" written by Berris's good friend, artist Bruce Jones.

Berni has now returned to New York City. When not lurking around his own apartment, he can often be found visiting some of the people who help make him the Berni you know today.

Did Warren, realizing his profit potential, really have him rebuilt from spare parts?

Did his buddies at Neill Adams' Comedy Studios recreate him the way they created, in the great tradition of Dr. Frankenstein, the iconic identity, *Crusty Bunkers*?

When asked these questions, Berni only laughs (as who wouldn't?) and asks if we would like to see the seams where the stitches held him together.

ACCEPT NO SUBSTITUTES!

Why buy CREEPY? EERIE? VAMPIRELLA? Why not one of the other black and white horror comic magazines that have proliferated in the past few months? Why buy an original when you can get a "clever copy at sometimes slightly less cost?"

Well, for one thing, a real connoisseur knows about quality. He doesn't shop at the Free & Dime for a Ming vase or at a used car dealer for a Rolls Royce. The seeker of quality is adventurous—he looks around before he buys. And then he buys the best.

That might be one reason why the Warren magazines sell better than any other black and white comic in America.

Warren Publishing has been around for a long time. We've tried a lot of different things. Some of them worked and have been kept, some of them didn't and were thrown out. We've been able to publish magazines that have had the approval of thousands of readers for a whole lot of years. We know they've approved because they have continued to buy Warren magazines, in ever-increasing numbers, through rising prices caused by inflation and temptations posed by "clever" competitors.

We like to think that Warren publications simply have more to offer. We have more stories (usually we per issue at only competitors' average four), more pages (devoted to graphic horror, not filler text). We even have more and better letters on our letters pages (possible because Warren's readers are more vocal - or possibly because of their higher level of intelligence). And with all that space devoted to readers' opinion, our readers know they have had a hand in shaping the kind of magazines Warren publishes.

We take ourselves seriously. In a editorial last month, we promised you more realistic, more contemporary, more controversial horror. We want to do more than just entertain you (though entertaining you is certainly our major goal). We want to interest and involve you as well. And from the letters we've been receiving recently, readers seem to think we're doing a pretty good job of it.

Of course, part of entertaining you and keeping your interest is employing the finest writers and artists available.

Warren brings you the best from around the world — internationally famous artists like **Cateban Warole**, **Jose Ortiz** and **Paul Neary** plus the finest American talents available. **Bernie Wrightson** and **Rich Corben** are both gifted artists and writers. Possibly this is what makes them two of the best storytellers around — even when they're telling someone else's story.

We have the best writers in the country as well. Bill DuBay, Brad Lewis, Bruce Brame, Gerry Boudreau and a few. From time to time we even feature adaptations of the best loved horror classics from the pen of H.P. Lovecraft, Edgar Allan Poe and Ambrose Bierce. You could find all these collections of writers in any publisher's magazines.

One huge advantage CREEPY, EERIE and VAMPIRELLA have over real publications are their fantastic color sections with hand separated color by Rich Corben and Michele Brand. Computers imitate our artists and writers... they don't even try to duplicate our color sections.

Warren's magazines come to you with more stories per issue, plus a color section, for the same price you pay for fewer stories and no color in the magazines of some competitors.

And, we have an unbeatable inside front and back cover in two colors instead of the eternal black and white muscle advertisements on the inside covers of competitive magazines.

If the facts haven't convinced you to remain a lifelong Warren reader, maybe our statement of policy will: At Warren, we pledge to give you our best — 100% of the time. We hope it's good enough.



THE SUN IS MUTE. IT JUST RISES, ANYWHERE THAT IT LIGHTS THE FIELDS OF A COUNTRY TORN IN TWO. BREEZES OF THE MORNING SIGH. BIRDS THRILL. AND THE SOFT SOUNDS THEY LEAVE BEHIND ARE **BROKEN** BY THE CREAK OF SADDLE, THE CLANK OF SABER...

ALL RIGHT-- WE'VE BEEN LOOKING FOR A NEST OF REBS TO CLEAN OUT... LOOKS LIKE WE'VE STUMBLERD ON A **FULL HOUSE**.

CAPTAIN... THAT'S A **HOSPITAL ENCAMPMENT--!**



THE FIELDS ARE ISHGORANT TO IT, BUT ON THE MAP THE COUNTRY IS **SPLIT**, DIVIDED INTO GEOGRAPHICAL SEGMENTS, OPPOSING **IDEOLOGIES**...

THE SUN SHINES UPON BOTH OF THEM.

I DON'T CARE **WHAT** THOSE TENTS REPRESENT--AS LONG THEY BEAR THE FLAG OF THE **CONFEDERACY**, THEY'RE **TARGETS** FOR MY ATTACK!

...JUST AS TWO MEN, BOTH FROM THE SAME GEOGRAPHICAL SEGMENT AND SHARING THE SAME **IDEOLOGY** ARE NOW DIVIDED...



I **PROTEST** SIR! IT IS A DISTINCT AND DELIBERATE TRANSGRESSION OF THE **ARTICLES OF WAR** TO ASSAULT A **HOSPITAL FACILITY**!

BEYOND DISTANCE UNMEASURABLE, SUNS WITHOUT NUMBER-- PINPRICKS IN A MIST TAPESTRY OF ETERNAL MIDNIGHT-- RILL AND MEAGERLY SHINE WITHIN A **GALAXY** TORN IN TWO...

BUT SIR, I MUST REMIND YOU THAT WE ARE A **HOSPITAL SHIP**--EQUIPPED ONLY WITH **DEFENSIVE** ARMAMENT.

YOU ARE A **NEALER**, VALER JACK HORN, AND AS SUCH YOU HAVE YET TO COMPREHEND THAT THE **BEST DEFENSE** IS A VICIOUS **OFFENSE**.



READY FOR **BLASTOFF**, GALAXY-GALLOPERS? THIS TALE'S A **LOADED** ONE... AND JUST TO GET **THROUGH** THIS STARDUSTED STRIFE I MAY HAVE TO FALL BACK ON...

The STARS My SALVATION

TRUE, SIR, I AM *ILL-
VERSE*D IN MILITARY
STRATEGY... BUT I DO
KNOW THAT OUR MISSION
IS TO TRANSPORT THE
PHAEDEA-HUB THE
MOST POWERFUL
WEAPON EVER DE-
VISED-- BUT IT IS A
WEAPON OF *HEAL-*
ING, AND IS
DESIGNED TO
COMBAT
DEATH...

AND MAY I REMIND YOU
THAT THIS *ULTIMATE-CURE*
HEALING DEVICE OF YOURS
WAS DEVELOPED FOR
ONE PURPOSE ONLY--
TO GET EACH AND EVERY
ONE OF OUR WOUNDED
VALORJACKS OUT OF
BED AND BACK IN
BATTLESHIPS!

THAT MAY HAVE BEEN THE *MILITARY'S*
MOTIVATION FOR FINANCING THE RESEARCH
AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE DEVICE, SIR--
BUT AS A PHYSICIAN, MY ONLY CONCERN
IS THAT THE MACHINE DEFEATS *DEATH*
NO MATTER *HOW* CLOSE DEATH IS
TO A STRICKEN JACK.

AND AS A VALORJACK, HORG, MY
ONLY CONCERN IS *KEEL-SEARING*
EVERY LAST PHAEORATE WHO
SECEDED FROM THE GALACTIC
FEDERACY!

THAT SHIP'S *PHAEORAN*--
WHY WASN'T IT DETECTED
BY THE *SENSORS*?! NO
MATTER-- WE'LL *BLAST*
IT INTO FREE-FLOATING
MESONS!

BUT SIR-- IT'S *CRIPPLED*-- JUST
A GUTTED *HULK*! WE ARE MANNING
A SHIP DEDICATED TO *SAVING*
PRESERVING LIVES, NOT *TAKING*
LIVES-- EVEN IF THEY'RE THE
LIVES OF THE *ENEMY*!

I DEMAND THAT
WE *ASSIST* THE
WOUNDED ON
THAT SHIP.

YOU WHAT, PLANKTON?!?
YOU *PROTEST*--?!

LISTEN TO ME, PLANKTON, AND
LISTEN WITH *MORE* THAN BOTH
EARS IF YOU WANT TO *KEEP*
THEM ON THE SIDES OF YOUR
HEAD-- THE UNION WILL *NOT*
TOLERATE GROSS INSUBORDINATION
FROM ITS SOLDIERS!

NOR WILL IT TOLERATE A DELIBERATE
VIOLATION OF THE RULES OF WAR!
THE REBS IN THOSE MEDICAL TENTS
ARE WOUNDED-- *DYING*-- THEY'RE
HELPLESS!

ONE MORE WORD FROM YOU, PLANKTON,
AND THOSE STINKING REBS DOWN THERE
WILL DIE UNDER A SABER FIRST
STAINED WITH *UNION BLOOD*!
NOW GET YOURSELF
INTO *ATTACK FORMATION*--

SORRY, CAPTAIN, BUT--



IF A DESERTER WON'T
FACE FIGHT--

--HE DESERVES TO
GET IT IN THE BACK!



NOT ANOTHER GLANCE IS
SPARED THE STRICKEN
SOLDIER-- FOR THERE IS
AN ASSAULT TO BE
MOUNTED. AN *ENEMY*
TO BE CHARGED.

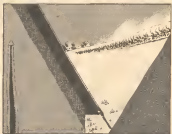


BUT THE ORB OF THE *SUN*
LOOKS DOWN, CAUGHT IN ITS
PASSIVE GAZE ARE *MOUNTED*
FORMS... AND A *SPRANKLED*
ONE

--CHARRRRGE!!!



FLASHING HOVE'S RAVAGE THE TURF ON THE HILL, CLOTS
OF DIRT SWEPT BEHIND THE THUNDERING ASSAULT. HELP-
LESS HOSPITAL TENTS LOOM *ABSEDER*, SILENT, *IMPASSIVE*,
AWAITING THE FRENETIC DISPLAY OF MARCHING FORCE...



...AND THEN THE TENTS *BREAK* THEIR
SILENCE-- WITH THE HISS AND CRACK OF
CANVAS ABRUPTLY WHIPPED *BACK*...



...TO REVEAL WAITING ROWS OF
HIGHLY-DISCIPLINED, GRIM-FACED MEN--



...THE KIND OF MEN WHO WOULD NOT NORMALLY
BE FOUND IN A HOSPITAL ENVIRONMENT.



THE BRUTAL MASSACRE IS SWIFT-- STUNNED CAVALRYMEN ARE RIPPED BY A DENSE BARRAGE OF CONFEDERATE RIFLE FIRE, AND PITCH TO THE BLOOD-SOAKED BATTLEFIELD THROUGH A SWIRLING MAZE OF ACRID SMOKE... UNTIL...



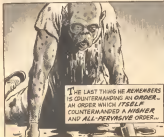
THE SLAUGHTER IS COMPLETE...



IN THE LIMITLESS VOID, A CRAFT OF SUBSTANCE HOVERS, THE PROCESSED AIR IT CONTAINS TINGLING WITH THE TENSION OF PREDATOR CLOSING WITH PREY... AND ON THE DECK, UNNOTICED BY THE STARSHIP COMMANDER...



...THE RUINED FORM OF A PHYSICIAN STIRS, FEEBLY RAISED HIMSELF FROM SPREADING PUDDLES OF BLOOD...



HE REMEMBERS A HANDHELD INSTRUMENT OF DEATH POINTED AT HIM--AND THEN HE REMEMBERS AN INSTRUMENT OF LIFE...



...AND POINTS HIMSELF AT IT... AND CRAWLS FROM THE BLOOD-SPOILED DECK, REALIZING HIS "SUPERIOR" IS FAR TOO PREOCCUPIED WITH ENGINEERING MORE DEATH TO CONSIDER THE POSSIBILITY OF LIFE IN SO SHREDDED A BODY...

HIS VISION FALLS AND **FADERS**, HIS GUT **THROSTS** IN QUEASY AGONY, AND HE FEELS THE **BLOOD WHEEL** FROM HIS RIPPED FORM WITH EACH WRENCHING EFFORT OF HIS CRAWL... AND HE WONDERS, **DWLY**, IF **ALL** HIS **BLOOD** WILL **SPILL** BEFORE HE REACHES HIS **DESTINATION**...



DAMN! INFERIOR WEAPONS ON THIS KITTEN-SHIP DON'T HAVE THE **RANGE**-- WON'T REACH THE PHAEDRON HULK...

BUT WAIT-- IF I DRAW NEARER, **SLOWLY**, UNDER THE RUSE OF **AIDING** THEM... THEY'LL SEE THIS IS A **HOSPITAL** SHIP AND HOLD THEIR **FIRE**-- UNTIL I AM CLOSE ENOUGH TO **SEAR** THEM.

SO CLOSE, THE ROOM AHEAD, THE BECKONING ROOM WITH THE **MIRACLE-CURE**... **SO CLOSE** THAT **NORG** TASTES BITTER **IRONY**...



MINUTES AGO, WE STOOD IN A SHIP THAT LEAPED **LIGHTYEARS** WITH EACH PASSING **MOMENT**... AND NOW HE CRAWLS INCHES IN WHAT SEEM LIKE **SECS**...

EVERYTHING IS **BLACK** FOR A TIME... THEN **NORG** FINDS THAT HIS WILL TO LIVE, TO **SAVE** LIVES, HAS **TRANSCENDED** DEATH'S BLEAK MESSAGE TO HIS **BRAIN**. SOMEHOW, HE HAS CRAWLED THE LENGTH OF THE **CORRIDOR**...



...AND IT WOULD BE **CRUEL** TO ALLOW THAT IMPOSSIBLE EFFORT TO LANGUISH IN VAIN... TO FAIL TO **CONSUMMATE** THE LONGEST JOURNEY OF HIS STAR-SPANGLED EXISTENCE...



WEAKLY, HIS NUMB FINGERS SCRABBLE AT THE TABLE-RESTING DEVICE... FUMBLE... AND FINALLY **DEPRESS** A DECEPTIVELY SIMPLE STUP-ACTIVATOR... RESPONDING BEAMS OF LIGHT, AND WARMTH, AND POWER-- AND **MIRACLES**-- EMANATE FROM THE MACHINE, WASH OVER HIM...

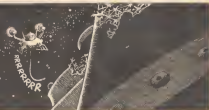
...UNTIL HIS KNEES ARE NO LONGER **BENDED** TO SUPPORT HIM-- UNTIL HE STANDS A MAN, **CURED**, HIS BODY SURGING WITH **STRENGTH**.



HE OWES THIS MACHINE A VAST...
DEBT... AND HE OWES IT TO COUNT-
LESS UNKNOWN LIVES TO SALVAGE
THE MACHINE FROM THIS SHIP OF
PERVERTED PURPOSE...



INTO THE SILENT IMMENSITY OF
SPACE A SEEMINGLY TINY AND
INSIGNIFICANT SHUTTLE-SQUIB
DARTS, ASSERTING THE MOTHER-
SHIP...



IT WORKED -- THE FOOLS!
ANOTHER FRACTION OF A GUARDANT
AND I'LL BE IN RANGE EVEN FOR
THESE LOW-POWERED WEAPONS!

BUT EVEN AS THE OBSESSED
COMMANDER OF THE STAR-
SHIP GLOATS THE PROMISE
OF TRIUMPH...



...THE SEEMINGLY CRIPPLED PHAEDIAN
HULK UNLEASHES A SALVO OF ENERGIZED
DEVIATION WORTHY OF THE BEST-
EQUIPPED, FULLY FUNCTIONAL WAR-
SHIPS ENGAGED IN THE MASSIVE
GALACTIC STRIFE...



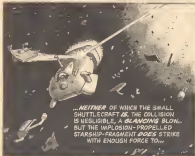
IT WAS A *BUT*--THE
SHIP'S *AND* CRIPPLED--
IT WAS DISGUISED FOR AN
AMBUSH!
NOOOOOOOO!

RIPPLES OF CORRUSCATING ENERGY-BEAMS SLASH AND
PENETRATE THE SLEEK STARSHIP, PERMEATE ITS HULLS, AND
SEAR INTO THE CORE OF THE SHIP...



...THEREIN TO UNDERGO
A CATASTROPHIC OVERLOAD
IMPLOSION...

SPACE IS INSTANTLY LITTERED WITH CAREENING DEBRIS...FLOTSAM
DESTINED TO SHOOT THROUGH AN INFINITY OF SPACE-- UNLESS
STOPPED BY AN *EQUAL* FORCE... OR AN IMMovable OBJECT...



...NEITHER OF WHICH THE SMALL
SHUTTLECRAFT OF THE COLLISION
IS NEGLIGIBLE, A SCRAMBLING BLOW--
BUT THE IMPLOSION-PROPELLED
STARSHIP-FRAGMENT *DOES* STRIKE
WITH ENOUGH FORCE TO...

--DEFLECTED MY COURSE! CONTROL'S
WON'T *RESPOND*-- I'M LOCKED IN THIS
TRAJECTORY TANGENT... AND I DON'T
EVEN KNOW WHERE IT WILL *LEAD*--



CAN'T EVEN *STOP* THE SQUIB...
NOT THAT IT WOULD DO ANY *GOOD*.



THE MOST I CAN *HOPE* FOR
IS A LANDING ON AN *INHABITED*
WORLD-- WHERE THE *HEAVING*
DEVICE WILL DO SOME *GOOD*...



VICTORIOUS, THE CONFEDERATE INFANTRYMEN MARCH AWAY FROM A VERY **SUCCESSFUL** BATTLEFIELD INDEED, LEAVING BEHIND THEIR WICK HOSPITAL TENTS... PERHAPS FOR ANOTHER DAY, ANOTHER **AMBUSH**...



THE CONFEDERATES WILL REPORT NOW TO THEIR **SUPERIORS**... AND LIST THIS DAY'S WORK AS A **TOTAL SUCCESS**... A **UNANIMOUS MASSACRE**...



...FOR, WHAT DOES IT **MATTER** IF THERE IS ONE TO WHOM DEATH WAS NOT **COMPLETELY** DEALT? IT IS A **LONG JOURNEY**... **AFOOT**... TO THE NEAREST **GENUINE** HOSPITAL TENTS...

SCUM-SUCKING **REBS**--!



IT IS **HIDDY** NOW... AND THE **SUN** HAS RISEN TO ITS PRIME VANTAGE POINT... TO LOOK DOWN UNCARINGLY UPON A SCENE OF **AWESOME CARNAGE**...



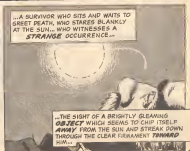
SUN'S SO... **NOT**...

...AND, IN TURN, TO BE LOOKED UPON BY A **SURVIVOR** OF THAT CARNAGE...



...A **SURVIVOR** WHO WILL NOT **LONG** HAVE CLAIM TO THAT CONDITION...

...A **SURVIVOR** WHO SITS AND WAITS TO GREET DEATH, WHO STARES BLANKLY AT THE **SUN**... WHO WITNESSES A **STRANGE OCCURRENCE**...



...THE SIGHT OF A **BRIGHTLY GLEAMING OBJECT** WHICH SEEMS TO CHIP ITSELF **AWAY** FROM THE **SUN** AND STREAK DOWN THROUGH THE CLEAR FIRMAMENT **TOWARD HIM**...

...ULTIMATELY SLAMMING
TO THE GROUND **NEARBY...**

DYING... **SEEING** THINGS... SEEMED
LIKE SOMETHING FELL FROM THE **SKY...**
CRASHED OVER THERE... **CLOSE...**

THEN, FOR THE CAPTAIN, THE WORLD
REELS AND TUMBLES DOWN A
WHIRLPOOL TO SWIRLING, LIQUID
BLACK...

...AND WHEN HIS EYES AGAIN **OPEN** -- FOR ONE
FINAL TIME -- HE SEES HIS DESTINY ETCHED IN A
FORM WHICH IS **UNIMAGINABLY** HORRIBLE... TO HIM.

THE LOATHSOME MONSTROSITY PLAINLY INTENDS TO
DO THE CAPTAIN **HARM...**



...AND THE CAPTAIN IS NOT A MAN TO ALLOW
WEAPONS TO BE POINTED AT HIM IF HE CAN
PREVENT IT...

NORG DIES **INSTANTLY**... DIES WITHIN **INCHES** OF THE
HEALING DEVICE HE WAS ON THE VERGE OF **ACTIVATING**...
THE HEALING DEVICE HE WISHED TO USE ON THE
STRANGE CAPTAIN-CREATURE OBVIOUSLY HEARING
DEATH...



IT IS NO MORE THAN SECONDS AFTER
HARRIS'S SUDDEN DEATH... THAT THE
CAPTAIN YOD, SUCCEUMBS TO A FINAL
SLEEP... SCANT YARDS FROM THE SOFT
EMISSION OF BEAMS CALLED-- AND
PROYEN-- MIRACULOUS...



AND AMID THE BULLET-LOPED
HILL THERE IS ONE WHO
REFUSED TO PARTICIPATE
IN THE ILL-FATED CHARGE...
POSSIBLY THE FIRST
CASUALTY OF THE
MASSACRE...



CAN'T SEE... BLIND... MUST
HAVE HIT MY HEAD... WHEN
I FELL... PAIN IN MY
BACK... BLEEPING...

... A CASUALTY WHO COULD NOT BRING HIMSELF TO
CHARGE DOWN THE HILL TOWARD THE HOSPITAL TENTS...



... BUT WHO NOW
HOPES TO CRAWL
DOWN TO THEM...
BRINGING NOT
DEATH, BUT
SEEKING AID
AND
SUPPLICATION...

GOT TO GET TO... HOSPITAL
ENCAMPMENT... BEFORE...
LOSE MUCH MORE BLOOD...
HOPE THEY WEREN'T
MASSACRED... BY MY
OWN TROOPS...

... A CASUALTY WHO DOES NOT KNOW THAT
THE "HOSPITAL" TENTS WERE BUT A FACADE
TO HARBINGERS OF DEATH...



... WHO DOES NOT KNOW THAT HE WILL FIND NO
AID WITHIN THOSE EMPTY TENTS...

... BUT WILL FIND
IT ELSEWHERE...



EVEN IF I DO REACH THE TENTS...
IT'LL TAKE A MIRACLE FROM
THE HEAVENS TO PULL ME
THROUGH THIS...

DINOSAUR SCENES HOBBY KITS
ALL-PLASTIC MONSTERS TO BUILD AND DISPLAY



ZIMETRODON

BLW: 20' long section at the bottom
of the section. The section is a
continuous deposit. One of the earliest
deposits. It is a very old deposit.
BLW: 20' long section at the bottom
of the section. The section is a
continuous deposit. One of the earliest
deposits. It is a very old deposit.



TYRANNOSAURUS REX

NEW: The King of the Chinooks. The most powerful resource ever to roam the earth. Find out what life is like on the inside of a Chinook's head. Call 1-800-451-1111.



ANKYLOSAURUS

Figure 4. A considerable distance, due to the steep-like bed and upland corner shed a vegetation, but an observability along road. One of the part of the distance. (2013.04.22. 20)

PLUS THESE 14 EXCITING FAVORITES!



IAANT INFO Called Pharoah, this is a large multi-story bldg. Could not find out what an entrance to 1st flr is a large "C" and includes all details, such as 11000 and the drawing (see #2414) \$1.00



IMPULSIVE DEMAGOGUE The 30-year-old man's speech is the epitome of half-baked ideas on race and how it may lead the death march of a great nation. He is under a total ban—off him against Jew!



14000 10010 10010 84 is over
2' long, and features the most
bracing mineral eye to with
the earth. One corner was the
master's breakfast / I had
spoon the blackish tin blood
around 10400 1100



GIANT WHOLEY MAJORITY The vast majority of the gophers in the marsh, but is over 14" long, and has the long beaked snout in all of his group. Majormouth was also older, although young, close to so.



THE PIT SCENE Here is a perfect setting for your Mammoth, Taper and other Mammoth 80 cubes complete with cutting, fire, smoke effects and professional rubber stains of death and devastation. **MSRP: \$13.95**



120 maximum weight. A partial and necessary companion for the Gay Magazine man. The line is over 4" tall and is posed to sit in the brightest of modern Pop bar or rave looking rooms, while huddling down. #100-12 00



PREHISTORIC CAVE Must be safe to half-probation humans can be placed inside. This cave people from the underground chambers that look without! Delisted entrance of cave the long - 1000 ft. (1000 ft.)



**BUILD AN ENTIRE
PREHISTORIC WORLD**
Here is an incredible
world of monsters
against man. Create
an entire diorama of
prehistoric life with
these exciting prehis-
toric kits. Featured
are all of the best-
known dinosaurs and
early mammals. A
challenging set of
hobby kits, a must
for all fans of ear-
ly life on our world.



WYOMING (center) Over 40 years in the production of an age-old greenhouse business, includes by me, rubber, cowhairs, produce and bird seed, and one-season plants. Over a large 12-acre. (1/25-12-92)



220 MAGNOLIA Walk (near to 11.00
at 11.00) 11.00-11.30 (11.30-12.00)
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13.00-13.30, 13.30-14.00, 14.00-14.30
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155.30-156.00, 156.00-156.30, 156.30-157.00
157.00-157.30, 157.30-158.00



GIANT ALLIGATOR Then and now: over 20' high and short the deadly crocodile of the Tropicana. Creature was 20' tall and lived in what is now the United States. Keep him right in the Tropics.



FLYING SAFFIRE The Flycatcher, the bird of the winged cupids. Its features lend with 18-17 wing-span. Creatures could perch here from the sun in a gl. leafy green canopy, but they up to the bird. #2478/11/00



SEARCHING FOR WWW This is one of the best systems I've seen in what is now Europe, and could set a temperature of extreme cold. It is 4.5/3 high with plasticity by some Italian. Put him in steel (0470/12 00)



CARL BERN A tough, tough and a most powerful beast of the Flintocene period. He was exclusively vegetarian (his animal was an amazing 1:3 taller than any bear of today) Muscled up by cuts of 100lb a day.



LONG-ARMED DISBURSE The model kit is over 1.7' long, and features the five-arms, 3-man unit that grew to over 20' long. Two display items in good sets used to contain auxiliary drawings. #1441, \$5.99.

IT
DIDN'T FEEL
LIKE
CHRISTMAS
EVE

OH,
ALL THE TRIMMINGS
WERE THERE, JUST AS
THEY HAD BEEN SINCE THE
DAY AFTER TRIMMINGS!
THE FETTER DECORATIONS,
THE SIDEWALK SAVERS HAD
TAKEN MORE THAN THEY
GAVE. THE LITE SMOKE-
HALL THAT COVERED THE
GROUND MELANCHOLY
WHITE...

BUT CHRISTMAS
IS MORE THAN
TRIMMINGS. IT IS
A FEELING

AND
IT JUST
DIDN'T FEEL
LIKE
CHRISTMAS
EVE.

The House of Life
LUNCH

Harry Co.

Christmas
Eve can
kill you

GEORGE THAYER HAD ALWAYS BEEN SOMEWHAT
SENTIMENTAL OVER CHRISTMAS. HE RECALLED HIS
CHILDHOOD YEARS, THE COOKIES AND MILK HE WOULD
LEAVE ON THE TABLE, THE SLEEPLESS NIGHTS HE SPENT
LISTENING FOR THE SOUND OF REINDEER ON HIS ROOF.



AND THE
LATER YEARS
WITH HIS WIFE,
JENNIE.

BUT THAT WAS
OVER. NOW,
JENNIE WAS
DEAD, AND
GEORGE WAS
ALONE.

AND CHRISTMAS EVE
CAN BE HELD WHEN
YOU'RE ALONE.

NOBODY LIKES TO WORK ON CHRISTMAS EVE, BUT SOME PEOPLE HAVE TO. THESE INCLUDE FIREMEN, HOSPITAL ATTENDANTS, BARTENDERS, PRIESTS...AND POLICE.

CHRISTOPHER MATTHESON
FELL INTO THE LATTER
CATEGORY.

MEG SERVING
TURKEY TOMORROW.
MATT?

HELL, NO! I WARNED
HER IF SHE PUT ONE OF
THOSE GHASTLY THINGS IN
FRONT OF ME, I'D CARVE
HER INSTEAD!

ALEXANDER,
MATTHESON...WORD
JUST IN THERE'S BEEN
A JEWELRY STORE
ROBBERY...

THE PROPRIETOR
SURPRISED THE THIEVES,
AND THEY SHOT HIM. A
COUPLE OF OUR BOYS WENT
DOWN TO CHECK IT OUT AND
IT'S TURNED INTO AN OPEN
GUN BATTLE...

WE LOST ONE
MAN ALREADY!
THEY WANT RE-
INFORCEMENTS!

WHO'S THE
DEAD MAN
MISER?

SGT SCHULMAN:
SIR, THEY CAUGHT
HIM BY SURPRISE!

HAD HIS WIFE
BEEN TOLD?

"WO, SIR. WE THOUGHT YOU
OUGHTTA BE THE ONE TO
DO IT."

"THANKS, YISER...AND
MERRY CHRISTMAS TO
YOU TOO!"

MATTHESON TOO HAD ALWAYS
THOUGHT CHRISTMAS WAS TO BE
SOMETHING SPECIAL. UNTIL THE
DAY HE BECAME A COP. THEN
HE LEARNED SCHMIDT BAIN-
FULLY, IT WAS JUST ANOTHER
DAY.

PEOPLE WERE SCARY. PEOPLE
DIED. PEOPLE WERE HAPPY.
PEOPLE WERE NOT. IT WAS
NO DIFFERENT. BUT STILL,
MATTHESON HAD TO EXPLAIN
TO A LOVING, GENTLE WOMAN
THAT HER HUSBAND WAS
MURDERED. ON CHRISTMAS
EVE.

THE QUESTION WAS NOW, W

MEANWHILE GEOFF TRAYNOR WALKED SOBERLY AIMLESSLY THROUGH THE BACK STREETS REMEMBERING THE PAST...



...CURSING THE PRESENT...



...AND DECIDING ON A SUITABLE MEANS TO CUT SHORT THE FUTURE!

WALTON "HE" 1984-1985



WHILE ELSEWHERE....!



IN A MODEST APARTMENT SOME THREE BLOCKS AWAY FRED SOUTHERN WAS EXHAUSTED, AND ASKED HIS WIFE, MARTY HOW ANY SIX YEAR OLD CHILD WAS SUPPOSED TO PLAY WITH THESE TOYS WHEN HIS 40 YEAR OLD FATHER COULDN'T EVEN FIGURE OUT HOW TO ASSEMBLE IT.



YOU'LL FIND A WAY, DEAR. YOU KNOW HOW LITTLE MARY IS LOOKING FORWARD TO THAT GAME....HE'D BE SO DISAPPOINTED TOMORROW IF "SANTA" DIDN'T BRING IT!



THE BOX SAYS BATTERIES INCLUDED BUT I CAN'T FIND THEM IN HERE. WHAT NOW? I CAN'T GIVE HIM A TOY THAT DOESN'T WORK!

THE DRUG STORE DOWN THE STREET IS OPEN LATE TONIGHT. I'M SURE YOU CAN GET SOME THERE...

KEEP YOURSELF
BUNDLED UP,
FRED...IT'S SNOWING
PRETTY HARD OUT.

FRED SOUTHER HAD BEEN
MARRIED 18 YEARS. SOME-
TIMES HE ASKED HIMSELF
IF IT WAS WORTH IT.



NOT THAT HIS HOME LIFE
WAS BAD...JUST THAT HE
FELT THERE WAS MORE
TO LIFE THAN WORKING
EVERY DAY TO SUPPORT A
WIFE AND KID.

HE JUST DIDN'T KNOW
WHAT.

SUDDENLY...

HEY! WHAT
ARE YOU DOING
THERE...?

BUT THERE WAS NO ANSWER
TO FRED SOUTHER'S QUESTION.
WALKING TOWN... GREEN
WAILED IN THE NIGHT...

BY THE TIME THE SQUAD CAR REACHED
THE SCENE OF THE JEWELRY STORE SNEAK-
OUT, CHRISTOPHER MATTHESON WAS ALREADY
AWAY. HE WAS A COMMON CONVICT FOR
THE HOMICIDE SQUAD, BUT COP KILLERS
WERE A SPECIAL AND DESPICABLE
BREED...

...AND THE ATTENTION THEY DREW
FROM THE OTHER OFFICERS WAS
EQUALLY SPECIAL AND SOMETIMES
DESPICABLE.

I'M STILL A STANDOFF,
MATT. THERE'S BEEN A
STEADY EXCHANGE OF FIRE,
BUT WE CAN'T HIT THEM
AND THEY CAN'T GET AT
US!

WE'RE GONNA GET
THEM, OFFICER. SGT
SCHULMANS WIDOW IS
GOING TO HAVE A VERY
LONELY CHRISTMAS
DINNER TOMORROW
BECAUSE OF THEM.

BUT MAYBE SHE'LL
SLEEP A LITTLE BETTER
AFTERWARDS IF HER HUSBAND'S
KILLERS AREN'T WALKING
THE STREETS.



ELSEWHERE, FRED SOUTHER LEARNED THAT THE SIGHT OF BLOOD CAN TAKE A MAN'S MIND OFF ANYTHING ELSE. MARTY WAS FORGOTTEN, THE BATTERIES WERE FORGOTTEN, HIS SELF-DOUBTS WERE FORGOTTEN...

THE ONLY THING IN HIS MIND WAS THE SIGHT OF GEOFF TRAINOR'S BLOOD STAINING THE WHITENESS OF THE SNOW.



LEAVE ME ALONE! I WANT TO DIE!

WISTER, IF YOU WANTED TO KILL YOURSELF, YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE DONE IT WHERE I COULD SEE YOU, BECAUSE THERE ARE SOME THINGS A MAN JUST CAN'T STAND BY AND WATCH...



AND SUICIDE IS ONE OF THEM!

FRED WAS ALMOST SURPRISED WHEN GEOFF TRAINOR FELL BACK. UNCONSCIOUS, FRED HAD COME TO THINK OF HIMSELF AS AN OLD MAN, OUT OF SHAPE. IN THOSE PAST FEW YEARS, IT MADE HIM FEEL GOOD TO KNOW THERE WAS STILL STRENGTH IN THAT POT-BELLIED BODY.



THERE'S A PHONE IN THE DRUG STORE... I CAN SUMMON AN AMBULANCE FROM THERE.

MEANWHILE...



I WANT YOU TO COVER ME, MEN. I'M GOING TO TRY A LONG SHOT...

CHRISTOPHER MATTHESON GAVE AMBIVALENCE. MAKE A DECISION AND SEE IT THROUGH WAS THE AXIOM HE LEARNED TO ADOPT SOON AFTER JOINING THE FORCE.

CHRISTOPHER MATTHESON **SAW...** AND PRAYED THAT THE RAIL OF **FLRY LEAD** WOULD **WRIT BY HIM...**



IT DID!

FRED SOUTHER WAS QUICKLY GROWING IMPATIENT. HE HAD **NOT** A PUNCTION AND THE **WARRS** CONDITION HAD **WORSEWED**. DESPITE WARE **SHIFT** EFFORTS TO **RIP** THE **BLEEDING**. FINALLY...



AND IT WAS THE **ONEY CHRISTMAS** PRESENT HE **WANTED...**

CHRISTOPHER MATTHESON **WAS** ALONE AT THAT **MOMENT**. AND SOME- **WHAT SCARED.**



I'VE DONE MY **BEST** FOR HIM, BUT HE NEEDS **PROFESSIONAL** HELP!

WE'LL SEE THAT HE **GETS IT!** BUT YOU'D **BETTER** COME WITH US. WE WILL NEED YOUR **HELP** FILLING OUT THE **REPORTS**.



I WANT TO DO... **BUT** WHY DON'T YOU **JUST** ME?

I DON'T WANT TO BE **ALONE** ANY MORE...



YOU'RE **NOT** ALONE



CAN'T DEPEND ON THE **ELEMENT** OF **SURPRISE**. BECAUSE THEY **SAW** US **CROSS** THE **STREET**. MY **ONLY** HOPE IS THAT THE **FIRE** FROM **OUTSIDE** WILL **DIVERT** THEIR **ATTENTION** LONG ENOUGH FOR ME TO...



...**BREAK** IN!



HOSPITALS ARE DEPRESSING ANY TIME, BUT ON CHRISTMAS EVE, THEY ARE *ESPECIALLY* UN-
DERVING. MATTHEWSON WANTED ONLY TO GET THROUGH THE RED TAPE AND RETURN TO THE SANCTUARY OF POLICE HEADQUARTERS.



EVEN THE DRUNKS IN THE DETENTION CAGE HERE EASIER TO TAKE THAN THIS

IT WAS OVER IN A MOMENT AND ALL GAVE SUDDENLY QUIET. *DISTURBINGLY* QUIET. THERE WAS NO JOY, NO ELATION, NOT EVEN RELIEF.



THIS ONE'S STILL ALIVE! BETTER SEND FOR AN AMBULANCE!



ANOTHER *EMERGENCY* CASE, DOCTOR. THIS ONE ATTEMPTED *SUICIDE* IN AN ALLEYWAY.

WHY WOULD ANYONE WANT TO COMMIT *SUICIDE* ON CHRISTMAS EVE?

IT'S NOT EASY FOR PEOPLE LIKE YOU AND ME TO UNDERSTAND, DOC. WE HAVE *WIVES* AND *KIDS* TO GO HOME TO...

BUT THINK ABOUT THE DRUNKS... THE WIDOWS... THE ORPHANS... THE AGED... THERE'S A HELLAVA LOT OF *LOVELY* PEOPLE OUT THERE. WHERE DO THEY GO ON CHRISTMAS?

A LITTLE LATER

X-RAYS

DID YOU HEAR ABOUT TRAYNOR... THE SUICIDE VICTIM?

HE'S REGAINED CONSCIOUSNESS! BUT IS STILL NOT HAPPY ABOUT BEING ALIVE.

IT TOOK ABOUT HALF AN HOUR FOR BUREAUCRACY BE APPEASED, AND ANOTHER FIVE MINUTES FOR MATTHEW TO STEP OUT AND MAKE A QUICK PURCHASE. THEN HE RETURNED, AND FOR THE FIRST TIME THAT EVENING, SMILED.

COPS! WHAT DO YOU WANT WITH ME NOW! HAVEN'T YOU DONE ENOUGH?

NOT QUITE

FROM THE HAND OF THE 11th RECLINER

YOU KNOW IT'S FUNNY, MATT, BUT THAT FIFTY CENT CARD MAY BE THE MOST VALUABLE GIFT YOU'VE EVER GIVEN.

TRAYNOR GAVE SOMETHING TOO! HE GAVE ME THE STRENGTH TO FACE SGT. SHERMAN'S WIDOW.

FRED SOUTHER FOUND SOMETHING THAT CHRISTMAS EVE, TOO. HE FOUND HIMSELF!

MAYBE THERE WAS MORE TO LIFE THAN SUPPORTING A FAMILY, BUT HE DIDN'T CARE BECAUSE HE WAS *CONTENT*. NO, *MORE* THAN THAT... HE WAS *HAPPY*!

IT WAS GOING TO BE A GOOD CHRISTMAS AFTER ALL!

Reflections in a Golden Spike

DECEMBER 18, 1904, CHICAGO LAY CRIPPLED beneath massive snow drifts, and still the torrential blizzard continued.

FOR NICK THOMAS, IT WAS THE END OF A LONG PILGRIMAGE... A RETURN TO THE CITY OF HIS BIRTH, AND THE FOUNDLING HOME IN WHICH HE WAS RAISED TWO YEARS HAD RASPED SINCE HE FLED ITS SHELTERED CORNERS AND TOOK TO ROWING THE RAILS.



NOW HE WAS A VERY *TWIND* KNIGHT OF THE ROAD, AND A VERY *OLD* FOURTEEN!

BUT NICK NEVER REGRETTED TRADING INNOCENCE FOR EXPERIENCE. HE HAD CHANGED A LOT DURING THOSE INTERVENING YEARS, WITHOUT STOPPING TO THINK THAT OTHER THINGS CHANGE TOO....



THE FOUNDLING HOME WAS GONE! LEVELLED BY FIRE! NICK WONDERED FLEETINGLY WHO DEATH HAD CLAIMED... AND WHO IT CHOSE TO *SABRE*!



BUT EVEN AS HE STOOD, WONDERING, THE COLD SEEMED TO REACH INTO HIS VERY *BONES*. HE GREW *DIZZY*... THEN PITCHED HEADLONG INTO THE BLUSTERY STORM.

NEARBY INSIDE AN OLD RAILWAY CAR, WAS THE RICK, WARM SMELL
OF BURNING PINE KNOT AND BARK CHIM! THE HOLIDAY SCENT STIRRED
THROUGH MEMORIES IN THE MIND OF CLAUDE ALBEE...



...MEMORIES OF THE DAYS WHEN HE WAS "MR.
CONDUCTOR, SR." ON THE CHICAGO-BOSTON RUN...



...MEMORIES THAT WERE
BRUTALLY INTERRUPTED!

EH...WHAT
WAS THAT?



WHY DID
HE LOOKS...



...LIKE
SOMEONE
NEEDS
HELP!



HE SEEMS NO
MORE THAN A
LAD.

I'D BETTER TAKE
HIM INSIDE AND WARM
HIM... IF HE AIN'T
FROZEN OVER
ALREADY!

TIME IS A MEANINGLESS CONCEPT ABOARD THE OLD RAILROAD
CAR. NEITHER COULD SAY HOW LONG IT WAS BEFORE WICK
FINALLY AWOKES.



SO LIVER ALIVE AFTER ALL!
WATS AN URGHN LIKE YOU
DOIN' OUT IN THIS
BLIZZARD?

LOOKIN' FOR THE
OL' HENDRICKS
FOSTER HOME.



OH, THAT BURNED
DOWN SOME
TIME BACK

THEY HAD
TO REBUILD ON
THE OTHER SIDE OF
THE CITY.

REBUILD. IT SEEMED TO MICK THAT PEOPLE WERE ALWAYS REBUILDING THINGS, HOUSES, MACHINES, DREAMS HE TRIED TO RECALL THE DAYS WHEN THINGS WERE SIMPLE...



MICK WAS A DOORSTEP BABY, UNDERFED, ILL-CLOTHED, POORLY EDUCATED. THE HENDRICKS WERE GOOD TO THEIR CHARGES, BUT THE MONEY THEY RECEIVED COULD BARELY SUPPORT THEMSELVES, MUCH LESS THE CHILDREN.



AND SO, TIRED OF SLOW STARVATION AND HOPEFUL OF BETTER THINGS ON THE ROAD, MICK RAN AWAY. HE WAS BRIEFLY MISSED, BUT NOT CHASED.



SO THAT'S THE STORY, OLD MAN. BUT WHAT ABOUT YOU? HOW DID YOU COME TO LIVE IN THIS OLD RAILROAD CAR?

IT'S AN OLD TALE, LAD. THE UNIONS CAME... FORCED ME TO RETIRE. BUT THE RAILROADS WERE MY LIFE!



A MAN JUST CAN'T THROW AWAY FORTY YEARS THAT EASILY.

SO I CAME HERE. THESE WARDS AIN'T BEEN USED IN TEN YEARS! I FOUND A CAR, FIXED IT UP THE WAY I WANTED, AND MOVED IN.

IT AIN'T MUCH, BUT IT REMINDS ME OF THE YEARS WHEN I MEANT SOMETHING.



IN THE DAYS THAT FOLLOWED, MICK AND CLAUDE FOUND FRIENDSHIP. BOTH WERE PROUD PRACTICAL PEOPLE WHOSE LIFE HAD DIFTCAST! BUT THEY STILL SURVIVED AS BEST THEY COULD.



AND BOTH SEEMED HAPPY AS THE WINTER THICKENED ON... AND CHRISTMAS DREW NEAR.

EACH DAY, MICK WOULD CARRY AN OLD SHOEBOX HE HAD FOUND IN THE FREIGHT YARDS, INTO THE CITY. HE CLEARED A LOT OF SNOW FOR... LITTLE MONEY.

HE NEVER TOLD CLAUDE WHERE HE WENT OR WHAT HE WAS DOING... AND CLAUDE NEVER ASKED.

UNTIL CHRISTMAS EVE.

WHAT HAVE YOU GOT THERE, LAD?

IT'S FOR YOU, OLD MAN. MERRY CHRISTMAS!

AND I HAVE SOMETHING FOR YOU, TOO, MY BOY... SOMETHING VERY SPECIAL!

THE GOLDEN SPIKE... THE LONG PIN WHICH ONCE TIED THE EASTERN PACIFIC WITH THE NORTHWESTERN LINE.

THE RAILROAD COMPANY PRESENTED IT AS A MEMENTO. BEFORE I, EH... PRO-CURED IT!

AFTER FORTY YEARS, I FELT THEY OWED ME SOMETHING!

BUT EVEN AS THE TWO FRIENDS EXCHANGED GIFTS IN THE COMFORT OF THEIR MAKE-SHIFT HOME, **FATE** HAD A CHRISTMAS SURPRISE OF HER OWN LURKING WITHOUT...!

SAGE GELLER AND **LUKE** CORD WERE **TWOED**, AFTER BEING **CHASSED** HALFWAY ACROSS THE CITY BY THE POLICE.

I THINK WE **LOST** THEM **LUKE**

AND ALL WE DID WAS BREAK INTO A **SALOON** LOOKING FOR SOMETHING TO HOLD US THROUGH THE **HOLIDAYS!**

HEY LOOK! THERE'S A **LIGHT** IN THE OLD RAILROAD CAR! MIGHT BE A GOOD PLACE TO STOP AND GET **WARM...**

WELL WHAT HAVE WE HERE? **OLD MAN BRAT!**

I HOPE YOU'RE **HOSPITABLE** HOSTS 'CAUSE WE'D HATE TO HAVE TO **EVICT** YOU ON CHRISTMAS EVE

SAGE! TAKE A LOOK AT THIS **PURE GOLD!**

IT MUST BE WORTH A **SMALL FORTUNE** MAYBE EVEN A **LARGE ONE**

NOW WHAT WOULD TWO **BUMS** LIVIN' IN A RAILROAD CAR BE GOIN' WITH SOMETHIN' LIKE **THAT?**

YOU'D NEVER UNDERSTAND. YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT IT'S LIKE TO **WORK** AT SOME-THINGS. YOU'RE TOO **BUSY TAKING!**

TWAK!

SHUT YOUR MOUTH IF YOU WANT TO **LIVE**, YA **OLD GOAT!**

MICK HAD ONLY ONE POSSESSION IN THE WORLD BESIDES THE **SAW** AND THE CLOTHES ON HIS BACK. A **GRAND-OLD** **SAMP KAMKE**, TWELVE INCHES LONG. WHEN **OPENED...** HE THOUGHT ABOUT IT WHEN HE SAW HIS FRIEND **CLAUDE FALL!**



THE SELLER HAD NEVER KILLED BEFORE EITHER...IT HORRIFIED AND REPELLED HIM AS HE STARED AT THE BROKEN BODY WHOSE YOUNG LIFE HE HAD CRUSHED.



HE DIDN'T EVEN NOTICE OLD CLAUDE...

...WHO HAD PICKED UP THE GOLDEN SPIKE, AND WITH A DETERMINATION BORDERING ON INSANITY...



...DROVE IT INTO JASE SELLER'S THROAT!



THE MAN NEVER EVEN UTTERED A CRY OF PAIN...OR DEATH!

PERHAPS IT WASN'T JASE SELLER WHOM CLAUDE HAD KILLED PERHAPS IT WAS THE UNION MAN WHO FORCED HIM INTO RETIREMENT OR THE RAILROAD PRESIDENT WHO CAST HIM OUT AFTER FORTY YEARS, WITH NEITHER MONEY NOR ANSWER.



NO!

HE WAS THE KILLER OF CLAUDE'S ONLY FRIEND, THE DESTROYER OF CLAUDE'S HOME, THE DESTROYER OF THE ONLY THING THIS BROKEN OLD MAN HAD LEFT.



IT WAS ENOUGH TO DRIVE A MAN MAD.

PAPE HAD HAD ITS LITTLE JOKE AT CLAUDE ALBEE'S EXPENSE. NOW IT WAS TIME FOR HIS.

THIS IS A NON-STOP EXPRESS FROM CHICAGO TO BOSTON. REST ROOMS ARE IN THE REAR...AND NO SMOKING PLEASE.

NOW GENTLEMEN YOUR TICKETS

I HOPE YOU ENJOY THE TRIP, GENTLEMEN. AND BY THE WAY, MERRY CHRISTMAS!

IT WAS A FUNNY JOKE. SO FUNNY THAT CLAUDE WANTED TO CRY.

THERE WAS A TIME WHEN CLAUDE ALBEE WAS **LIVE** MICK THOMAS, YOUNG, ADVENTUROUS, LEARNING WHAT **HAD** TO BE LEARNED "TO SURVIVE", AND ALWAYS WONDERING IF THERE WAS MORE TO LIFE THAN SURVIVAL.

WE DID WHAT WE COULD, MICK, BECAUSE THERE WAS NOTHING LEFT FOR US TO DO.

BUT WHAT OF THE OTHER KIDS IN THAT ORPHANAGE SHOULD THEY LEARN TO DO THE SAME...OR SHOULD WE GIVE THEM THE CHANCE TO FIND SOMETHING **DIFFERENT**?

I THINK I KNOW WHAT YOU WOULD SAY.

I AM OLD AND TIRED NOW WITH NO PLACE LEFT TO GO. I HAVE NO MORE USE FOR THIS **GOLDEN SNAKE**, EXCEPT IN RELIVING THE PAST...

BUT THERE ARE OTHERS WHOSE **FUTURE** IS YET TO BE LIVED. THEY ARE THE ONES DESERVING OF THIS...! THEY CAN USE IT!

MAYBE, WITH LUCK, THEY MIGHT END UP LIKE US, MICK!

This Golden Pen is presented to the Hendricks Foster Home, in the name of Mick Thomas, from the conductor of Car No. 17, Mercy Christmas

"YOU HAVE HEARD THAT THE ANTICHRIST IS COMING... THEREFORE WE KNOW THAT IT IS THE LAST HOUR..." (JOHN 2:18)

Anti-Christmas

ENTRIES IN HAZARETH JAILHOUSE ARE NOTICABLY STRINGENT BY LATE DECEMBER. ITS THE SILENT WOODS APPROACHING THE PINNACLE OF SEVERITY.

DECEMBER 20, 1930. BULL IS IMMEDIATELY AND NOT A SINGLE AT LEAST NOT ANYMORE, BUT ON THIS, THE EVE OF CHRISTMAS, SHE SAYS THAT THE "GOOD" PEOPLE OF HAZARETH ARE FAR MORE INTERESTED IN THE MIDWESTERN WINTER.

NOTION OF HAZARETH CLING

THE END OF THE WORLD IS COMING!

HAZARETH

HAZARETH, INDIANA, LAY ALONG THE PULSE OF THE BIBLE BELT. IT WAS PROPOSED TO BE A STRONGHOLD OF CHRISTIANITY.

BUT THROUGH THE YEARS, BULL 30 HAD WATCHED THE PULSE OF CIVILIZATION ERODE. AND THE GOOD BOOK BECAME A MANGA BOOK OF HYPOCRISY.

BROTHERHOOD'S RISTIAN HOPE'S RIVIVAL

AND THE NAME OF CHRISTIANITY HAD BEEN CHARGED WITH THE GUILT OF MURDER. AND THE ONLY WAY TO DELIVER THEMSELVES FROM A "TRAMP"

BULL IS REMOVED WHAT THE BIBLE HAS COMING TO.



BILLIE JO'S PAINS WERE GROWING MORE ACUTE, MORE ANNOYING HER. MURDER PAINS FILLED THE SILENT STABLE. JOSEPH DROPPED HIMSELF TO THEM, LEFT THEM CRUMPLED IN THE INEVITABLE DARK THAT ANATED.

BILLIE JO SLOWLY SUCCEMBED TO THE DEMANDS OF UNCONSCIOUSNESS, AND HER THOUGHTS FELL UPON ANOTHER TIME, SOME TWO YEARS EARLIER...



IN THE WEEKS THAT FOLLOWED, BILLIE JO LEARNED TWO THINGS. POVERTY BEGETS MORE POVERTY, AND DESTITUTION IS A SHORT STEP FROM PROSTITUTION.



THEN SHE MET JOSEPH. NOT RICH, PERHAPS, BUT PROUD, AND PRIDE WAS SOMETHING SHE HAD SACRIFICED A LONG TIME AGO.

PRIDE WAS WHAT JOSEPH OFFERED HER, ALONG WITH HER FIRST ENEMY...





IT'S ALMOST
A PITY THAT THE
YOUNG MOTHER WILL
NEVER KNOW THE ANSWER
THAT WAS BESTOWED ON
HER. AT LAST THE
ANCIENT PROMISES
HAVE BEEN
FULFILLED...!

THIS
IS THE
ANTICHRIST
HE WHO DENIES
THE FATHER
AND THE
SON...!



YOU HAVE
SERVED THE
MASTER WELL,
JOSEPH. FOR THAT
YOU SHALL HAVE
YOUR REWARD



HERE
BILLIE JO
OUR
SON...!

ELSEWHERE



TONIGHT? IS
THE NIGHT, BROTHERS,
I CAN FEEL IT.
SMELL IT...!

THE UNIVERSE
REEKS WITH THE STENCH
OF EVIL, AND IT TELLS
ME THAT THE HORRORS
ARE TRUE.



TONIGHT IT
WAS BORN THAT
WHICH HAS COME TO
CORRUPT AND DECEIVE.
TO UNDO THE WORK IT
HAS TAKEN GOD
CENTURIES TO
ACCOMPLISH...!

GENTLEMEN,
WE FACE THE GREATEST
MOST NOBLE TASK A
CHRISTIAN HAS EVER FACED
WE MUST FIND THIS EVIL...
AND DESTROY IT!



BUT
HOW CAN
WE BE CER-
TAIN?

I AM
CERTAIN I
KNOW WHO IN THIS
TOWN ARE GOOD MEN
AND WHO ARE THE
UNREDEEMABLE
SINNERS. I HAVE
HEARD THE EVIL ONES
WHISPER ABOUT
THIS NIGHT. ABOUT
HIS COMING. THE
MOMENT IS AT HAND
AND WE MUST NOT
BE AFRAID TO
STRIKE!

JUAN BAPTISTE WAS **AFRAID**. HE HAD CARRIED ON THE LORD'S WORK FOR TWENTY YEARS IN HIS SIMPLE PARISH. HE HAD ALWAYS DONE SO WITHOUT THE AID OF A **CLUB** OR **KNIFE**.

IT WAS A HABIT HE WAS NOT QUICK TO **CHANGE**.

WHERE ARE WE GOING?

TO THE ONLY **HOSPITAL** IN NAZARETH. IF THE CHILD WAS **BORN** IT WOULD BE THE **PERVERTED ARMY** OF THE DEVIL TO HAVE HIS CHILD BORN IN A **CHRISTIAN CLINIC**!

BUT NOW WILL WE KNOW WHICH ONE?

IF NECESSARY WE WILL **SLAY THEM ALL!** WHAT ARE THE LIVES OF A FEW CHILDREN COMPARED TO THE **EVIL BROUGHT BY THE DEVIL'S OFFERING**?

"YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT **MURDER**!"

NO MR. BAPTISTE, I AM TALKING ABOUT THE **REDEMPTION** OF THE HUMAN RACE. I AM A **CHRISTIAN** SIR! GOD IS WITH ME! ARE YOU WITH THE LORD...OR **AGAINST HIM?**

THE WHINE OF RUBBER ON DAMP PAVEMENT DRONED MONOTONOUSLY AS THE CAR SPED NORTHWARD. IT'S PASSENGERS THOUGHT ONLY OF **SPEED AND DISTANCE!**

WE SHOULD BE IN **BALTIMORE** BY LATE TOMORROW. THE CHILD WILL BE **SAFE** THERE.

MEANWHILE, NAZARETH WILL SOON LEARN THE MEANING OF THE PHRASE **RELIGIOUS PERSECUTION**. PERSECUTION BY THE RELIGIOUS. OUR MASTER'S WORK WILL BE **DONE...**

AND BY THOSE WHO WILL CLAIM TO BE SERVING HIS **ENEMY**. CHRISTIANS CERTAINLY ARE A **CURIOUS BREED!**

WELCOME TO BALTIMORE





FRESH
FOOTPRINTS THEY
OURED BELONG TO
THAT WHORE

THEY LEAD
TOWARD THE
OLD BRIDE!

JOSEPH STUDIED WILLIE SO MORE CLOSELY THAN HE
EVER HAD IN THE MONTHS OF THEIR MARRIAGE. SHE
WAS MORE THAN A WIFE TO HIM NOW, SHE WAS
THE MOTHER OF A CHILD WHICH, WHILE NOT FULLY
HIS, HAD AT LEAST SPRUNG FORTH FROM HIS LOINS.



FOR A MOMENT HE DOUBTED WHAT HE HAD DONE.
HE WAS A TRUE SERVANT OF SATAN, YET WHY
HAD HE NEVER EXPERIENCED THE SAME
EMOTIONS OF JOY AND LOVE THAT EMANATED
FROM THIS CHILD-BRIDE.



THE FACT THAT THE BEAST WAS NOT
EVEN HERE SEEMED ALMOST TO
HOCK HIM!



SUDDENLY...

YOU! I
SHOULD HAVE
REALIZED! IF
ANYONE WERE TO BE
THE MOTHER OF THE
DEVIL'S CHILD IT
WOULD BE
YOU!

FATHER!



BUT YOU HAVE
LABORED IN VAIN, WHORE!
WE HAVE COME TO SLAY
THE DEVIL-CHILD BEFORE
THE WORLD IS INFECTED
WITH HIS EVIL!

T-YOU'RE
CRAZY!





A Gentle Takeover



OLIVER CUBBINS GLANCED AGAIN AND AGAIN AT THE DATE ON THE CALENDAR. HE GLOMERED AT IT, SLOWLY CUT THE WINDOW. **DECEMBER 24, 1999.** CHRISTMAS EVE BY ALL LOGICAL EXPLANATIONS. ONLY HERE, IN THE CAPITOL CITY, TONIGHT WAS **NOT** THE NIGHT BEFORE CHRISTMAS. AND OLIVER CUBBINS WAS SEETHING.



THE MAIN SYSTEM HAD **ABOLISHED** THE HOLIDAY AROUND SIXTEEN YEARS AGO. THERE WAS A WHOLE GENERATION THAT HAD **NEVER HAD A CHRISTMAS.** AND OLIVER CUBBINS WAS SEETHING.



PEOPLE WERE BECOMING TOO PREOCCUPIED WITH CELEBRATION PREPARATIONS AND WERE LOSING INTEREST IN THEIR WORK, THEREFORE REPEALING THE "SYSTEM" THROUGHOUT THE PROLONGED HOLIDAY SEASON. LEGISLATION PASSED TO MAKE IT **LEGAL.** AND OLIVER CUBBINS WAS SEETHING.



HE WAS ALONE AND REMEMBERED THE DEATH OF CHRISTMAS HAD STARTED IN THE EARLY SEVENTIES WHEN A PRESIDENT ORDERED THERE BE NO CHRISTMAS LIGHTS...

I WONDER...THE ATTIC? NO... SURELY NOT...NOT AFTER ALL THESE YEARS!

...TO CONSERVE ENERGY, IT HAD STARTED THEN, THE SLAYING OF A SPIRIT. NOW IT CAME TO TAKE A WORLD OF NO FANTASY, NO LOVE, HOMOGENIZED, PASTEURIZED, CUBICIZED...

I THREW NEARLY EVERYTHING AWAY...I KNOW I THREW IT AWAY TOO!

CRAP! I'M WASTING MY TIME. I JUST KNOW I THREW IT AWAY...

...I JUST KNOW!

...GAMIFIED AND STERILIZED THERE'S NO PLACE LIKE NUNS!

I'LL BE DAMNED...

...I KNEW I'D KEPT IT!

IN A WORLD WHERE SENTIMENT AND TRIVIAL THINGS WERE OUTLAWED...

...OLIVER CUBBINS HAD NEVER REALLY LET GO OF YESTERDAY.

THE OLD RELIC HAD BELONGED TO HIS FATHER (AND FOR SOME REASON... PERHAPS PREDESTINATION, THE OLD WARRIOR HAD CLUNG TO IT, HOLDING IT DEERER HIM, HIS MIND TOUCHED A THOUSAND REMEMBRANCES.



I LOOK LIKE A MANSY OLD DOG. BUT I GUESS MY OWN MISKERS AND HAIRLL DO FOR THE MASQUERADE



LANS WERE BENS SHATTERED BY THE SECOND AS THE RE-SURRECTION OF A LOVELY MYTH HURRIED ON TO...

HAHAHA!
THE JOLLY
OLD ELF,
HIMSELF!



A POINT OF NO RETURN.

HEHC... NO!
THIS IS UNREAL!
HA! AND THIS
OL' SANTY'S SACK!
THAT'S WHAT THIS
IS, BY
GOD!



AND WHAT'S SANTA WITH-
OUT HIS SACK? GOLDEN
CANDLESICKS! SILVER MEDALS,
CUPS, SPOONS, PICTURE FRAMES,
APPLES, CANDY! EVERYTHING
IN THE SACK! ONLY TWO MORE
SHOPPING HOURS UNTIL
CHRISTMAS!
NO! NO! NO!



OLIVER... SANTA CLEARED HIS
THROAT, FILLED HIS LUNGS WITH
THE CRISP CHRISTMAS CHILL.
TASSELING WITH JOYFUL
INGERS, WONDERFUL ANSWER,
HE THREW BACK HIS HEAD
AND BOON THE HOLIDAY!

NO NO NO! MERRYYY
CHRISMASSS!
NO NO NO! NO NO!





HERE COMES SANTA CLAUS, HERE COMES SANTA CLAUS, RIGHT DOWN SANTA CLAUS LANE! HERE...

LET'S PARTY UP!



...COMES SANTA CLAUS, HERE COMES SANTA CLAUS, RIGHT DOWN SANTA CLAUS LANE.

LET'S PARTY UP!



RIGHT DOWN SANTA CLAUS LANE...!

MERRY CHRISTMAS, EVERYBODY! MERRY CHRISTMAS!



WHAT MADNESS IS THIS? DON'T YOU ALL KNOW YOU CAN BE SHOT ON SIGHT FOR THIS? THIS IS A LEGAL RIOT! WHAT'S COME OVER YOU PEOPLE?



MERRY CHRISTMAS, YOU LOVELESS FOOLS!



YAHN! SHOOT HIM! HE'S THE LEADER!

AREN'T YOU GONNA WISH ME MERRY CHRISTMAS? COM'ON... WISH ME!



UGH!

NO... SANTA CLAUS, DON'T KILL HIM

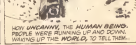


PLEASE DON'T KILL HIM

YEAH THERE'S ANOTHER WAY



NOT TO MIGHT, NO KILLING TONIGHT!





OH LITTLE TOWN OF BETHLEHEM, NOW STILL WE SEE THESE LIES

THE INFECTIOUS JOY SPREAD THROUGH THE CITY UNTIL IT WAS RAMPANT. PATROL VEHICLES WERE SMASHED, WEAPONS SPLINTERED...



SILENT NIGHT, HOLY NIGHT, ALL IS CALM, ALL IS BRIGHT

...YET NO BLOOD WAS SHED, OLIVER CLIMBED TO THE TOP OF A MONUMENT...



HOLY INFANT SO TENDER AND MILD...

...SO THE WHOLE CITY COULD SEE SANTA CLAUS WAS ALIVE, AND SO WERE THEY.



...SLEEP IN HEAVENLY PEACE...

THE STREETS WERE FILLED WITH THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE, FREE PEOPLE, THEIR VOICES RANG OUT TOGETHER, IN PEACE.



...SLEEP IN HEAVENLY PEACE, SLEEP IN HEEVEENLY PEACE.

A NEW BORN PEOPLE, AND PEACE. PEACE. THAT'S WHAT IT WAS ALL ABOUT NOW. SLEEP IN HEAVENLY PEACE.



PEACE ON EARTH AND MERCY MILD.

OLIVER THOUGHT OF ALL THE LIVES THAT HAD BEEN RYSED, AND IT CLIMINATED IN THIS. THEY HAD TAKEN OVER, BUT GENTLY, A GENTLE TAKE-OVER, AND THEY'D NEVER BE SLAVES AGAIN.



GOD AND SINNERS RECONCILED!

SUDDENLY A SFT NIGHT BATHED THE THRONS OF CHRISTMAS ORICLES, A SOFT AND GENTLE RADANCE AS DELICATE AS A SMILE, SHONE ALL AROUND.



JOY TO THE WORLD, THE LORD HAS COME.

THE JOYFUL SINGING ECHOED IN HIS HEART AND A MILLION CANDLES LIGHTED THE EARTH AS HE LOOKED INTO THE HEAVEN TOWARD ANOTHER LIGHT.



THE CLEAR COLD NIGHT SHONE FORTH A STAR, A STAR WHICH HAD NOT SHONE IN 2,000 YEARS.

ITS WHITE BRILLANCE TOUCHED THE FREE CITY AND EVERY HEART IN IT, AND SOFTLY IN THE NIGHT, IT BEGAN TO SNOW.

THE CHRISTMAS VISIT



BESIDES, WHAT'S TO BE MERRY ABOUT ANYWAY? THE SITUATION THE WORLD'S IN... CRIME IN THE STREETS, INFLATION, WAR, HUNGER, MURDER, RAPE, STUPIDNESS, AND NIXON GETTING OFF SCOTT FREE. SO YOU TELL ME! WHAT'S TO BE MERRY ABOUT?

WHADDAYA MEAN, WHEN YA GOTCHA HEALTH YA GOT JUST ABOUT EVERYTHIN' WHO SAYS I'M HEALTHY?



NAA, I DIDN'T
EVEN PUT UP A
TREE THIS YEAR.
WHY? TWENTY
SEVEN FIFTY
FOR A THREE
ROOT PINN?
YA NUTS?



NAA. COME
ON IN, BE WITDA
IN A MINUTE NOT
YOU, REILLY? I
WAS TALKING TO
A CUSTOMER.
LISTEN, GOTTA
GO...



...TALK TO YA
TOMORROW AWRIGHT,
AWRIGHT, THE NEXT
DAY THEN YEAA.
SAME TO YOU BYE
WHAT'LL IT BE,
MACK?

OH, I DON'T
KNOW!



HERE, HAVE A GLASS OF
WINE. ITS ON THE HOUSE.

WELL, THANKS, ARCH.

HEY, HOW'D YOU KNOW
MY NAME? SAY ALSO
HOW'D YOU GET IN HERE?
THE DOOR WAS
LOCKED!



WELL, YOUR SIGN SAYS
ARCHIE'S TAVERN. YOU
MUST BE ARCH, ONLY AN
OWNER'D WORK LATE
ON CHRISTMAS EVE.



AND I SORT OF
HAVE A SPECIAL
KNACK FOR
LOCKED DOORS

SAY, YOU'D
BE A GOOD
CROOK. YOU A
MISTER?



HARDLY. BUT I ALWAYS SEEM
TO BE IN THE COMPANY OF
THIEVES AND WONDERS. GUESS
ITS JUST MY LINE OF WORK
THAT ASSOCIATES ME WITH
ALL COMPANY.

OH,
A COP
EH?



NOPE. MORE OF A
TRAVELING
LANDLORD.

OH, I
GOTCHA. SAY,
AINCHA GOT
NO FAMILY?
WHY AINCHA
HOME FOR
CHRISTMAS?

WELL, I AM
HOME. I JUST
DECIDED TO TAKE
OFF FROM WORK
AND HAVE A
CHRISTMAS
VISIT.



I SEE A NATIVE
NEW YORKER.

WELL, I USED
TO LIVE FURTHER
EAST.

FURTHER EAST?
WHERE? ON A BOAT
OFF CONEY ISLAND?
HEHEHEHEH!

HEY, THAT'S A NICE RECORD
YOU PLAYED. ITS FROM THAT KID
SHOW, "JESUS CHRIST
SUPERSTAR" I USED TO THINK
IT WAS SACRILEGIOUS BEFORE
I REALLY LISTENED TO THE
WORDS OF IT.

YEAH, THAT'S WHAT CAUSES
ALOT OF TROUBLE NOWA-
DAYS. PEOPLE MAKE SNAP
JUDGEMENTS BEFORE
THEY LISTEN.

WELL, I GOTTA
BE GOING

ME TOO.
GUESS I'LL
GO HOME
AND HIT
THE HAY

AREN'T YOU GOING
TO SPEND CHRISTMAS
EVE WITH YOUR
FAMILY?

ME? Y'KIDDIN'!
I AIN'T GOT NO FAMILY
OTHER THAN A SISTER,
AND SHE'S A CHURCH
FANATIC. BESIDES, I
HATE CHRISTMAS!

AW, ARCH YOU
DON'T HATE
CHRISTMAS.

THE HELL
I DON'T.

ARCH, CHRISTMAS IS THE
TIME OF PEACE ON EARTH,
GOOD CHEER, LOVE, GIVING
AND MOST OF ALL MIRACLES.

MIRACLES? CRAP! WHAT
MIRACLES? LIKE THE MIRACLE
OF GETTING MUGGED AND
THROWN IN JAIL FOR FIGHTING
BACK? OR GETTING STRAPPED
WITH INCOME TAX? OR...
POVERTY, OR SICKNESS
OR...

NO ARCH, THOSE THINGS HAVE
HAPPENED EVER SINCE THE
WORLD BEGAN, AND ITS
FOREVER. I GUESS THE POOR
YOU'LL HAVE ALWAYS, BUT
CAN'T YOU LOOK AND BE
THANKFUL FOR THE GOOD
THINGS?

NOTHING'S
GOOD!



THERE'S SOME GOOD IN EVERYTHING. A LITTLE MIRACLE IS IN EVERYBODY. EVEN THOUGH VERY FEW PEOPLE KNOW IT.

HUMPH! THE OPTIMIST!

PAPER, MISTER?

HEY YEAH, SHAVE A PAPER SONNY. HERE'S A FIVER, KEEP THE CHANGE. MERRY CHRISTMAS.

A FIVER? GOSH, THANKS MISTER, AND MERRY CHRISTMAS TO YOU.

CHRIST! A DO-GOODER!

SAY FELLA, DO YOU LIKE BASEBALL? BET YOU DO, DON'T YA?

BOY, DO I! I AIN'T NEVER GOT TO PLAY NONE, CAUSE OF MY CRUTCHES.

YEAH, WHO'S YOUR FAVORITE PLAYER?

HANK AARCH!

WELL I'LL BE DOGGONED! IT JUST SO HAPPENS THAT I'VE GOT A BALL PERSONALLY AUTOGRAPHED BY HANK AARCH HIMSELF 'HERE, CATCH!

WOWOW! THANKS A MILLION, MISTER!

WAIT LL THE GUYS SEE THIS! MERRY CHRISTMAS! MERRY CHRISTMAS, MISTER!

WELL I'LL BE DAMNED.

NO YOU WON'T, HEH HE'LL BE BLOCKS FROM HERE BEFORE HE REALIZES THAT HE LEFT HIS CRUTCHES BEHIND, AND LL NEVER NEED 'EM AGAIN. SEE? THERE'S A LITTLE MIRACLE IN ALL OF US, ARCH.

PROBABLY WAS FAKIN' THE LITTLE FART!

YOU'RE ONE TOUGH CUSTOMER, ARCH.

AND YOU'RE ONE SOFTIE! HEY, LOOK UP THE STREET THERE! THERE'S A CROWD. SOMETHING'S GONING ON LET'S GO.

SUPPOSE SOMEONE'S
GIVING AWAY SOMETHING?
B'IS CROWD.

IF HE IS,
HE'S THROWING
IT OFF THE TOP
OF THE
BUILDING!

JUMP! HEY, COME
ON JUMP!

YEAH, GET IT OVER WITH
WE GOTTA GET HOME!

HEY STUPID!
LET'S HAVE A
SNOW!

LOOK! THERE'S
A GUY ON THE LEDGE.
LISTEN TO THESE
VULTURES! THEY HOPE
HE JUMPS! JUST SO
THEY CAN SEE HIM
SPATTER!

DID ANYBODY
CALL THE PLACE?

NOW! DON'T!
THEY'D JUST
SPOIL IT FOR
US! AND HIM!

I SAY... THERE'S YOUR
CHRISTMAS MIRACLE
FOR Y... NOW WHERE'D
HE GO? THIS MUSTA
BEEN TOO MUCH
FOR HIM!

HEY JUMP!

THERE'S YOUR
CHRISTMAS
MIRACLE, BUDDY!
THE GUY'S SO FED
UP WITH HATE AND
GLOOM, HE'S
GONNA END IT ALL
ON CHRISTMAS
EVE!

OH MY GODY! THERE'S
ANOTHER PERSON ON
THE LEDGE NOW!

GOOD GRIEF! WHAT'S
THAT OTHER GUY
DOING OUT THERE?
TRYING TO GET
HIMSELF KILLED
TOO?

THIS IS
TOO MUCH!

IS THE NEW GUY
GONNA JUMP OFF
TOO?

YAYYYY!
HE TALKED HIM
OUT OF IT!
YAYYYYYY!

THERE
WAS A GUY UP
THERE FIRST WHO
WAS GONNA JUMP
THEN THIS OTHER
GUY SHOWED UP
OUTTA NOWHERE
WITH HIM!

HEY, HERE
COMES A FIRE
TRUCK!

ENGINE NO.
40

LOOK! THE
FIRST GUY IS TAKING
HOLD OF THE SECOND
GUY'S HAND. WOW! THE
SECOND GUY IS
HELPING HIM IN A
WINDOW

WELL, I'LL BE
DAMNED!







OCTOBER HAD BLUSTERED AND FLUSTERED,
THE OLD DARK AUTUMN HAD COME TO THE
ENGLISH COUNTRYSIDE, RIPPING THE LAST
CLIMBINGS OF MUGGY SUMMER AWAY AT
LAST.

BROWN LEAVES SPRINKLED IN THE FALL
EVENING WINDS LIKE DARK DAPPLES
RAIN, TO GO SUTTERING AWAY DOWN THE
WET COBBLE STREETS, SOUNDING LIKE
RAT'S FEET SCRATCHING IN DARK
TOMBS.

SOMBER AUTUMN MELODIES, PLAYED HIGHLY
AMONG THE GROANING BLACK TREELIARS AS
OCTOBER LASHED AWAY SNORR-PULSED BACK
AND FORTH IN THE AERY, ROLLING SNIER.

THE FA ST. MICHAEL'S CHURCH
AND NIGHTLY I STOOD BEFORE MY HOME
LISTENING TO THE DELIGHTFUL DARGES
PLAYED FOR ME ENJOYING, APR LAUDING,
CALLING FOR AUTHOR.

The CHRISTMAS GNOME

of Timothy Bracy!

OCTOBER'D COME, THEN HAD GIVEN WAY TO CHILLY
SURLY NOVEMBER, AND I WAS JUST AS
ENTERTAINED.



FOR OCTOBER SETS THE STAGE FOR DEMONIC NIGHT
PARTIES PLAYED IN DARKENED NOVEMBER, NIGHT-
THINGS MOVED OUTSIDE, AND OLD NINES KEPT
THEMSELVES INSIDE, SHIVERING AT SOUNDS GONG
"BUMP", WITHOUT.



STORY: BUDD LEWIS / ART: LEOPOLD SANCHEZ



"WAA, SWEET AS *MOTHER'S* KISS, HATE TO WASTE IT! 'TAM, MY BOY, INDULGE YOURSELF!"

IT'D NEVER BEEN CLEAR TO ME BEFORE THAT *OLD NIVES* TILES ARE SUPPORTED BY *OLD NIVES*, LIKE *ANNE*. BUT, HERE IT WAS...

...MAGGIE BRAXLEY'S OFFERING TO THE *DAIRY SPIRITS* OF THE NIGHT. A FRESH BOWL OF MILK FOR THE IMPS, SPIRITS AND GNOME.



THAT'S WHAT SHE'S DOING... LEAVING MILK FOR THE TROUBLEMAKING *ELVES*. 'AH, MY DEAR, SWEET DUMB NIFE, MAGGIE!"



"AH, WELL! THE OLD WOMAN'D BE DISAPPOINTED IF HER OFFERING WASN'T TOUCHED IN THE MORNING. THE EARLY GNOME GETS THE CREAM!"

IT MUST HAVE BEEN ONE OF THOSE *EVES* WHEN THE *WEE SPIRITS* WERE ON THE PROWL, AND THE ONLY WAY TO KEEP THEM *HAPPY* WAS *BRIBERY*.



HERE, LET THE LITTLE DEVILS DRINK THIS! FAR LESS SCARCE THAN MILK AND FAR MORE FUN!"

I'D NEVER LOST WHAT MUM CALLED HER *MILK TOOTH*. THUS, I MADE AN *IRREVERSIBLE EXCHANGE*. BECAUSE, I HAD A ST VERTED AT MAGGIE FOR LEAVING *SANBLES* TO *FAIRIES* AND *ELVES*. THOUGHT SHE'D GROWN OUT OF THAT THINKING.



"NOTHING LIKE A GOOD SLUG OF MILK BEFORE TURNING IN!"

RECALLING BITS AND FLURRIES OF LOCAL *LORE*, ON CERTAIN *EVENINGS* WHEN THE *POLES* PROMISED IF A HOUSE DID NOT LEAVE SOMETHING TO EAT FOR THEM, THEY'D CAUSE *CHAOS*.



ON NOTHING *MONUMENTAL*, BUT *FRANKS*, SUCH AS CURDLING THE MILK, STOPPING UP THE FIREPLACE, MAKING THE BABIES CRY AND SUCH.



BUT, OF COURSE, SPIRITS, IMPS, ELVES AND GNOME WERE *IMMEDIATELY* OBVIOUSLY!"

THEY WERE ONLY *SCAREGOATS* FOR LIFE'S *SHALLA WAYSANCES*. "AND KNOCKED OVER THE BUTTER CHURN?" "THE *ELVES* DID IT!"

SAFE IN THIS KNOWLEDGE AND A BELLY FULL OF FRESH MILK, I TURNED IN FOR A CHILLY NIGHT'S REPOSE.

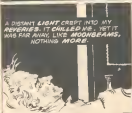


SLEEP OVERTOOK
ME AND I KNEW
LITTLE OF THE
WORLD THAT
REVOLVED ABOUT
ME. THE OLD
HOMAN WAS IN
HER BEDROOM AND
HER SWORING
LULLED ME INTO
THE ARMS OF
MORPHEUS.

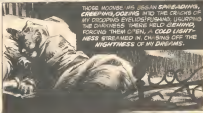
STRANGE LATE NOV'
EMBER WEAVERS
SKITTERED AROUND IN
MY DREAMINGS. DARK,
SOOKING CLOUDS
GATHERED BEHIND MY
HORIZONS AND CHILL,
SOMBER WINDS
BLEW TRAILING
PRESENCES ACROSS
MY MOONS, SHAPES,
ODD, ENGAGING,
TWISTED AND
LUMBERED AROUND
MY TOMBS!



A DISTANT LIGHT CREPT INTO MY
REVERIES. IT CALLED ME. YET IT
WAS FAR AWAY, LIKE MOONBEAMS,
NOTHING MORE.



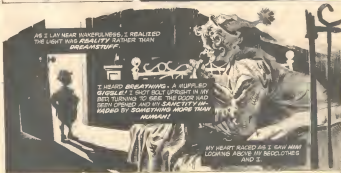
THOSE MOONBEAMS BEGAN SHINE-DOWN,
CREEPING, DOING INTO THE CRACKS OF
MY DROOPING EYELIDS, PUSHING, USURPING
THE DARKNESS THERE, FELD GEMING,
FORCING THEM OPEN, A COLD LIGHT-
NESS STREAMED IN, CHISING OFF THE
NIGHTNESS OF MY DREAMS.



AS I LAY NEAR WAKEFULNESS, I REALIZED
THE LIGHT WAS REALITY RATHER THAN
DREAMSTUFF.

I HEARD BREATHING. A HUPPED
GYDLE! I SHOT BOLT UPRIGHT IN MY
BED TURNING TO SEE THE DOOR HAD
BEEN OPENED AND MY SANCTITY IM-
KINED BY SOMETHING MORE THAN
HUMAN!

MY HEART RACED AS I SAW MOM
LOOKING ABOVE MY BEDCLOTHES
AND I.



THE FEATURES WERE GONE ON THE
THING STANDING BEFORE ME AND
A PUNGENT ODOR STUNG MY
NOSTRILS. IT SPOKES!

I REACHED FOR MY REVOLVER
WITH ACH TO REPEL THE
INVADER.

I WAS IN FEAR FOR MY
LIFE. I DID AS
INSTRUCTED
AND LIT THE
NIGHTLIGHT!



COME ON
THEN, GUY! DON'T DO
THAT! JUST TURN ON
TH' LIGHT! I CAN
BARELY SEE
YOU

EVENH,
GOVERNOR!

HE STOPPED ME. I
COULD SMELL HIS REEKING
BREATH!

PLEASE... IF IT'S
MONEY YOU WANT...

A GIGGLE, THE STRANGEST I'D
EVER SEEN, STOOD TESTERINALLY
PROPPED AGAINST MY BEDPOST.

I SAW THE STRANGEST I'D EVER
SEEN... THE ONLYEST I'D EVER
SEEN, TO BE SURE!



SHAY NOW!
THAT'SH BETTER,
GUY. MY HYDRO, YOU
CERTAINLY LOOK
SHIRTLED!

PLEASE
DON'T BE I'M
HERE! I CHOOSE
YOU! YOU'RE IT,
MATEY!

HE GIGLED LIKE A JACK-O-LANTERN
AND KEPT TRYING TO CROSS HIS ARMS,
BUT THEY KEPT UNCROSSING. HE
APPEARED TO BE IN A BAD WAY. HIS
EYES WERE BLEARY, HIS SPEECH WAS
SLURRED AND HE HAD THE MOST UN-
STEADY GIGGLE I COULD IMAGINE.

THEN, HIS SMELL HIT ME AGAIN...



WHY!
YOU'RE
DRUNK!

AND
THAT'SH EXACTLY
WHAT I'VE GOT TO
THANK YE FOR,
MATEY!

YOURS WAS
THE MOST THOUGHT-
FUL OFFERING OF
THEM ALL! YOU
WIN, HANDSH
DOWN!

AND SO HE
WAS! SMASHED
AS A LORD!
GROGGED! ON
MY BRANDY!
BUT HE WAS
POLITE
ABOUT IT!

SAY... WHO
ARE YOU
ANYWAY?

COME ALONG, BERTIE!
LET'SH NOT BE NAIVE.
SHALL WE? OBVIOUSLY
I AM THE LITTLE
PEOPLE YOU SO KINDLY
LEFT A BOWL OF FINE
BRANDY OUT FOR!

BRANDY?
OH, OH, BY
GOD!



YOU'RE
A GNOME
THEN?

THE GNOME,
HENRY! THE
GNOME!

WHAT
THE
GNOME?

THE
CHRISTMAS
GNOME,
DUCKS!

I SEE.
SAY, THESE
ARE GOOD
SMOKES.

GUNS!
I SHORE
LOVE GUNS!

CAREFUL,
IT'S LOADED!

SNO AN E!

Y'KNOW ONCE I WASH
OVER IN FRENCH, WHILE THEY
WERE HARRING WITH SOME-
BODY OR THE OTHER,
FORGOT JUST WHO...

BUT SOMEBODY!
Y'KNOW HOW THEM
FROGS ARE, ALWAYS SMITTIN'
WITH SOMEBODY...AND ANY-
WAY, I FIXED THEIR
GUNS FOR EM.

GLAD YOU
LIKE EM, CLANCEY!
I GOT 'EM OUTTA
YOUR BOX!

LIKE
THIS!

POOF!

THEY GOT
SO BLEEDIN' MAD
THEY ALL WENT HOME.
I RUINED A PERFECTLY
GOOD WAR, ACCIDENTALLY.
WEND YOU!

SHAY, HOW
'BOUT A HAM
SANDWICH? NOT
JEWISH ARE
YOU?

SO, ANYWAY, WHEN
I FOUND THE BOWL OF
MILK, I FIGURED OL' MASS
HAD LEFT IT OUT FOR SOME
SUPERSTITIOUS PURPOSE! AND
NOT BELIEVING IN ELVES
AND THE LIKE, I DRANK THE
MILK AND POURED IT BACK
UP WITH BRANDY!

MEAN AFTER
ME OWN HEART
PASS THAT MUSTARD
JUG, WILLYA
TIMMY BOY?

SO IT IS,
ON THIS EVENIN',
ONCE A YEAR, I
COME AROUND TO ALL
THE HOUSES AND SEE
WHAT THEY LEFT
ME.

I PICK THE
MOST GENEROUS GIFT
AND GRANT THE LEAVER-
OUTER HIS MOST CHOICEST
WISH FOR CHRISTMAS.

I'M USUALLY
AROUND A MONTH
BEFORE THE YULE
SOS I COME UP WITH
THE GIFT IN TIME.

AND YOU
LIKED THE
BRANDY, EN?

I'M HERE,
AIN'T I? I'M
I WOULDN'T BELIEVE WHAT
THESE OLD WIVES USUALLY
LEAVE ME. STALE COOKIES,
SOFT TAFFY, MILK -
YEEECH!

WANT
ANOTHER
PICKLED
EGG?

PICKLED EGGS!
GOD! WHAT A TREAT!
I DO BELIEVE TO HAVE
CHOSE YOU IF YOU DA ONLY
LEFT ME A COUPLE OF
PICKLED EGGS!

SAY HANNIBAL,
IT'S GETTING LIGHT
OUT. IT'S ALMOST DAWN.
WOULD YOU SNOWBES HAVE
TO BE BACK UNDER A
BRIDGE OR SOMETHING
BEFORE SUNUP?

TALK ABOUT OLD
WIVES TALES!
CERTAINLY NOT! DO
YOU? OLD BRIDGES!
BLECH!

SAY SPEAKING
OF OLD BRIDGES... I
KNOW ONE WHERE THE
TROUT PLAY UNDER IT AS
BIG AS THAT SAUSAGE!
WANT TO GO FISHING?
HE COULD BRICK A LUNCH!

GETTING OUT
EARLY LIKE THIS
IS BEST. BEATS THE
CROWDS. COURSE THERE
AIN'T NO CROWDS AT
MY FISHIN' MULE!

UH, TMMY
BOY, DID YOU
BRICK THE
EGGS?

A BAKER'S
DOZEN OF EM,
HANNIBAL. THINK
I'D FORGET YOUR
FAVORITE?

BEST
FRIEND I
EVER HAD!

THAT'S REALLY
SWEET OF YOU,
TIM.

DAMN IT!
HE GOT ME WORK!
BUT SEEING AS HOW
WE AND YOU IS
FRIENDS, FRIENDS
REALLY SHOULD
EXCHANGE
GIFTS.

DONE!
WELL EXCHANGE
GIFTS FOR
CHRISTMAS...
FRIEND!

Y'KNOW,
I NEVER DID SAY
WHAT YOU'D LIKE
FOR CHRISTMAS

AW, I DON'T
NEED NOTHING.
HANNIBAL, I
WOULDN'T WANT TO
IMPOSE ON OUR
FRIENDSHIP

WELL,
ALRIGHT! BUT
ONLY IF IT'S AN
EXCHANGE!

ONLY WAY
TO HAVE IT...
FRIEND!

LET'S SEAL
IT WITH A
PICKLED
EGG!



WELL, A **SARFAN** WAS HIT UPON... MY **MUSH** WAS MADE FOR MY CHRISTMAS PRESENT AND HANNIBAL HAD TO BE ON HIS WAY FOR AWHILE. **BUZY** PEOPLE CHRISTMAS EGGS!

DECK THE HALLS WITH
BOUNDS OF HOLLY,
FALALALA LA LALA
A LAAAA! O



I'D RECEIVED SEVERAL CARDS FROM HANNIBAL FROM THE CONTINENT. HIS CARDS WERE ALWAYS FULL OF GOOD CHEER AND FRIENDSHIP.

HERE'S YOURS, HANNIBAL. THE BEST TO BE BOUGHT.



SAD HE'D BE BACK FOR CHRISTMAS! AND IF HE COULD ARRANGE TO GIVE ME THE GUTS I NEEDED WED BE OFF TO-- GATHER FOR A YEAR LONG HOLIDAY AROUND THE WORLD. NONE NO MEN AND SONS! AND HANNIBAL NEVER COMPLAINE.

I MISSED MY FRIEND SORELY. THOUGHT ABOUT HIM EVERYDAY. BUT I KNEW HE WAS A GENTLEMANLY GROWN OF HIS WORD. AND I KNEW HE'D GET HIS BUSINESS IN ORDER IN TIME TO COME BACK FOR CHRISTMAS.



I DID SO LONG FOR SOMEONE TO SHARE THE HAPPY SEASON WITH. AS MADDIE SAID HER! SELF AWAY SHE MATED CHRISTMAS.

CHRISTMAS **BARRY** EDGED INTO MY ROOM AND I SLIPPED DOWNSTAIRS TO SEE WHAT **MIGHT** BE UNDER THE TREE.



WELL, I'LL BE DAMNED!

AND THERE, SURE ENOUGH, WAS A SIGHT TO DELIGHT MY EYES AND HEART.



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very quiet person in that office. He
was in uniform in public. 81204-22



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